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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000471

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SUBJECT: MOSQUE SERMONS FOR SAUDI ARABIA JULY 7: EASTERN
IMAM DESCRIBES JIHAD AS PEACEFUL, BUT DENOUNCES FATAH AND
PRAISES HAMAS; IN MECCA, A PLEA FOR UNITY OF MUSLIMS;
MEDINA IMAM PRAISES TRUTHFULNESS

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller, for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

FROM THE EASTERN PROVINCE: IMAM DESCRIBES GRAND JIHAD AS
ESSENTIALLY PEACEFUL

¶1. (C) Imam Shaikh Mohammad al-Qahtani returned to
provocative matters for his sermons at the Imam Ahmad bin
Hanbal Mosque in al-Khobar on July 7. In the first part of
his lesson, al-Qahtani talked about jihad, explaining that
the "Grand Jihad" is the highest form of struggle "and it's
not necessarily attained through violence. Rather," the imam
explained, "through endless persistence, long perseverance,
and other peaceful means. These are the true attributes of a
true Jihadist, and...God's Messenger, the Prophet Mohammed
and his companions, set an excellent example in the early
days of Islam when they reacted through peaceful struggles
immediately after Jihad was first revealed to them."

PEACEFUL MEANS NOT RECOMMENDED IN HAMAS VS. FATAH STRUGGLE

¶2. (C) Al-Qahtani then turned his attention to the
intra-Palestinian struggle. The imam's dislike for Yasser
Arafat is well known and in this instance his criticism went
further than usual and forswore the principle of "peaceful"
Jihad that he had just expounded. He described "HAMAS and
its members as the true Jihadists working hard to preserve
their country's identity and keep their enemy at bay." He
called Fatah "a movement that is American trained and Israeli
funded, a movement that is not ashamed to receive gifts and
assistance from the enemy to fight and kill its own people."
He then briefly referred to the transfer of 3,000 Israeli
weapons to Fatah. He also accused many Fatah members and
commanders of being trained in the United States by the CIA,
a reference, in the source's opinion, to the CIA's security
assistance program developed under the auspices of George
Tenet, Arafat and Mohammad Dahlan and Israel in the 1990's.
Al-Qahtani concluded with a litany of invective, calling
Fatah lackeys, puppets, enemies of the Palestinian State and
Muslims, and agents provocateurs.

FROM MECCA: CALL FOR UNITY OF MUSLIMS

¶3. (U) At the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Shaykh Sa'ud
ibn-Ibrahim al-Shuraym preached a sermon calling for
"cooperation among Muslims and unity and solidarity within

the Muslim community." He advised that Muslims get closer to one another, so that they could "feel" with each other. "Once such a positive situation was achieved between Muslim communities, they would not then fall prey to the machinations of their enemies. The disunity among the Muslim ranks," he asserted to the congregation, "is the root cause of the hardships and crises the community is going through."

MUSLIMS MUST BE UNITED IN SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS

¶4. (U) He then advocated that this unity be devoted to the support of the Palestinians, calling to the worshipers: "There are in our Islamic nation communities which are going through mean days where right is replaced by falsehood, because the cycle of time has given the liar power on earth, making him the owner of the land and making the original owner of the land a terrorist and a refugee, who has no right. All that calls for pooling the resources of Muslim communities--peoples, rulers, and decision makers--to surround those communities with mercifulness, sympathy, and sense of duty toward them and working hard to achieve justice."

FROM MEDINA: TRUTH IS GREAT IN THIS WORLD AND IN THE
HEREAFTER

¶5. (U) Speaking at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, Imam Shaykh Ali bin Abd-al-Rahman al-Hudhayfi delivered a sermon in praise of truthfulness, promising that "Truthfulness is a noble characteristic and a good and great description that only characterizes the one with a sound heart. Truthfulness reveals the mettle of the individual, his good manners, and good conduct."

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PRAYER IN SUPPORT OF MUSLIMS IN PALESTINE AND IRAQ

¶6. (U) He concluded his sermon with a prayer asking God to: "release Muslim prisoners ... preserve our Muslim brothers in Palestine ,... preserve our Muslim brothers in Iraq."

¶6.
Gfoeller